

Message Text

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TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS EYES ONLY FOR COUNSELOR NIMETZ

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: SOVIET REACTION TO US CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATION
AT SALT

1. WE ARE REPEATING TO YOU A MEMORANDUM FROM INR - HAROLD
SAUNDERS (DRAFTED BY INR STAFF) WHICH, ALTHOUGH LONG,
WE FELT YOU WOULD FIND USEFUL WHILE YOU WERE IN GENEVA.

2. BEGIN QUOTE: IMPLICIT IN THE SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF US
CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AT THE SALT TWO DISCUSSIONS
IN GENEVA IS MOSCOW'S AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE THAT
SUCH PARTICIPATION MIGHT PLAY IN THE RATIFICATION PROCESS.
WHEN CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS HAVE BEEN PRESENT, THE SOVIETS
EVIDENTLY HAVE DELIBERATELY CHOSEN "APPROPRIATE" SUBJECTS
FOR THEIR PLENARY STATEMENTS AND HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN
ABOUT THE FAILURE OF THE US DELEGATION TO FOLLOW SUIT. THE
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FACT THAT THE US DID NOT PROGRAM ITS SALT PRESENTATIONS OR
ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE CONGRESSIONAL ADVISORS ON WHAT TO
SAY MAY HAVE GIVEN ADDED WEIGHT IN SOVIET EYES TO THE
CONGRESSMEN'S STATED CONCERNS. RECENT SOVIET CONCESSIONS
ON THE ISSUES OF DELIBERATE CONCEALMENT AND DATA BASE MAY
EVEN HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED, AT LEAST IN PART, BY THE
STRENGTH OF THOSE EXPRESSED CONCERNS.

3. WHEN SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN ACTING AS ADVISORS TO THE US SALT DELEGATION HAVE ATTENDED PLENARY MEETINGS AND DISCUSSED SALT ISSUES WITH MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET DELEGATION, THE US DELEGATION HAS MAINTAINED A "BUSINESS AS USUAL" MODE OF OPERATION. THIS BEHAVIOR APPARENTLY HAS LED THE SOVIETS TO BELIEVE THAT THE US WAS NOT TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE CONGRESSIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF SALT. IN A BILATERAL DISCUSSION IN MID-JULY, FOR EXAMPLE, ONE SOVIET SALT OFFICIAL COMMENTED TO HIS US COUNTERPART THAT THE US HAD MADE AN "UNFORTUNATE CHOICE" OF TOPICS TO SPEAK ABOUT ON THE ARRIVAL OF SENATOR MATHIAS. THE US OFFICIAL REPLIED THAT THE US DID NOT FEEL THE NEED TO MAKE CHANGES IN DEFERENCE TO DISTINGUISHED VISITORS AND ASKED WHETHER THE SOVIET SIDE HAD CHOSEN ITS TOPIC BECAUSE OF THE SENATOR'S PRESENCE? THIS SUGGESTION WAS DENIED.

4. WHEN US CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT PLENARY SESSIONS, THE SOVIETS HAVE OFTEN FOCUSED ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE DISCUSSIONS AND ON THE SOVIET DESIRE FOR A MORE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT AND IN PARTICULAR, ON ADDITIONAL US SYSTEMS THE SOVIETS SEEK TO CONSTRAIN. IN ADDITION, THE SOVIETS HAVE EMPHASIZED THE HIGHLY POLITICAL ISSUES OF NON-CIRCUMVENTION AND NON-TRANSFER, WHERE THE SOVIETS SEEK CONCESSIONS THAT, IF
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GRANTED, COULD FACE STIFF CONGRESSIONAL CHALLENGE. IN GENERAL, THE SOVIET PRESENTATIONS HAVE TENDED TO OBSCURE MAJOR DIFFERENCES OF VIEW BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR.

5. SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT DEALING WITH CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN EVIDENT IN OTHER WAYS. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, MINISTER SEMENOV ASKED AMBASSADOR EARLE FOR BACKGROUND DATA ON CONGRESSMEN NOT WELL KNOWN TO THE SOVIETS. SEMENOV FURTHER ASKED EARLE FOR ADVICE ON WHAT "MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE ADVISABLE TO SAY." HE NOTED THAT:

"THE SOVIET DELEGATION DID NOT HAVE ADVISORS OF THAT KIND, AND IN THIS SENSE ITS WORK WAS SIMPLER. HOWEVER, SINCE THINGS HAD DEVELOPED IN THIS WAY, THE NEW FACTOR SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN ORDER TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE OBJECTIVES OUR GOVERNMENTS PURSUED IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS."

EARLE HAS PROVIDED SEMENOV WITH SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT VARIOUS CONGRESSMEN BUT HAS STATED THAT IT WOULD BE BEYOND HIS COMPETENCE TO TELL SEMENOV WHAT TO

SAY; IN ANY CASE, HE THOUGHT, SEMENOV WOULD BE QUITE CAPABLE OF HANDLING THESE SITUATIONS VERY WELL.

6. SEMENOV ALSO MADE IT A POINT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO STRESS TO CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS THE DEDICATION OF THE SOVIET DELEGATION TO THE ARMS CONTROL PROCESS. HE HAS CITED THE HARD WORK AND LONG HOURS PUT IN BY BOTH DELEGATIONS AND THE LONG-TERM COMMITMENT OF SEVERAL OF THE SOVIET DELEGATES TO SALT.

7. MOST SOVIET STATEMENTS ABOUT US CONGRESSIONAL PARTICIPATION AT SALT HAVE BEEN CONSCIOUSLY POSITIVE IN TONE. SEMENOV HAS COMMENTED TO EARLE THAT THE SOVIET SIDE FOUND THE MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND
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REPRESENTATIVES INTERESTING BECAUSE THEY PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF US LEGISLATORS. "WHO WOULD VOTE FOR AND AGAINST RATIFICATION OF THE SALT AGREEMENT" IS A QUESTION OFTEN RAISED WITH CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS. IN THIS CONNECTION, ACADEMICIAN SHCHUKIN, AN INTERLOCUTOR WITH PAUL NITZE IN SALT ONE, HAS STATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO SENATOR JACKSON ON SALT TWO ISSUES.

8. WHATEVER THE SOVIETS BELIEVE ABOUT THE UTILITY OF GENEVA VISITS BY US REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS AND THE US DELEGATION'S POLICY OF BUSINESS AS USUAL, THEY APPARENTLY HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE STRENGTH OF CONGRESSIONAL OPINION ON CERTAIN ISSUES. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE VISITORS HAVE EMPHASIZED AND DETAILED THE COMPLEXITY OF THE RATIFICATION PROCESS IN THE SENATE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ADEQUATE VERIFICATION AND DATA EXCHANGE IF RATIFICATION IS TO BE ACHIEVED.

9. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE SOVIETS HAVE OCCASIONALLY IMPLIED THAT THE US APPEARS TO BE REINVENTING THE VERIFICATION WHEEL. ONE MEMBER OF THE SOVIET DELEGATION STATED TO A US DELEGATE THAT THE US PUTS TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON VERIFICATION. THE US DELEGATE REPLIED THAT, FAR FROM PLACING TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON IT, THE US HAD EXPOSED THE SOVIETS TO ONLY THE "TIP OF THE ICEBERG."

10. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHAT INFLUENCE STATEMENTS BY CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS HAVE HAD ON THE SOVIETS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE RECENT CONCESSIONS ON TWO ISSUES THAT HAVE BEEN STRESSED BY THE VISITORS HOWEVER--DELIBERATE CONCEALMENT AND DATA BASE EXCHANGE. IN ONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE DELEGA-
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TIONS, THE SOVIETS NOTED THAT PROGRESS MADE ON DELIBERATE
CONCEALMENT "WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL WITH THE CONGRESS."
THE SOVIETS HAVE ALSO INDICATED THAT THE CONCERNS OF THE
CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS WOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO MOSCOW.
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